

The Flash Boys

Photo from National Air and Space Museum



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In the 1950s, the above-ground testing of US nuclear and thermonuclear weapons became, for some hardy souls, a spectator sport. The government filmed and photographed these explosions, bringing in their own technicians to do the job. In the large photo here, up-close cameramen and photographers record a 1953 explosion of a nuclear weapon at the Nevada Test Site, 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Other test observers were invited guests. In the inset, a select group of VIPs, sporting special eyewear to protect the user from the nuclear flash, observe one of the four Operation Greenhouse thermonuclear tests on Enewetak Atoll in 1951.